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QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

Letter dated 10 July 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement on East Timor made by the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal at Lisbon on 2 July 1992 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 103 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Fernando REINO
Ambassador of Portugal
Permanent Representative to the
United Nations

* A/47/50.

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ANNEX

Statement made at Lisbon on 2 July 1992 by the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal on the sentencing to life imprisonment of a Timorese in Dili

Portugal has repeatedly denounced the steady cynicism and contempt with which Indonesia defies international criticism and démarches. The Jakarta authorities continue to offer a deplorable image in the trials and sentencing of the Timorese civilians arrested in the wake of the massacre committed on 12 November 1992 in Santa Cruz Cemetery.

It has now been the turn of Gregorio da Cunha Saldanha to be sentenced to life imprisonment, accused of having been the main instigator and organizer of the demonstration held on that day. A few days ago, Francisco Miranda Branco was given 15 years. Neither of them was charged with violence, and both should, therefore, like the other civilian demonstrators who have received long prison sentences, have been released without delay in accordance with the consensus statement of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to which Indonesia subscribed.

The iniquitous and unlawful sentence handed down to Gregorio da Cunha Saldanha shows Indonesia's growing contempt for the international community. It is clear proof that the promises it made with the aim of lessening the indignation caused by the massacre cannot be trusted, and that the Indonesian authorities have no intention whatsoever of respecting the commitments they made before the Commission on Human Rights.

Indonesian repression of the survivors of the Santa Cruz massacre remains merciless, while the soldiers actually responsible for the shooting have been given token sentences, mainly on charges of disobeying orders. The promised investigations into the circumstances surrounding the massacre, and punishment of those responsible, have produced this grotesque result, which reveals a total lack of good faith.

Indonesia's willingness to go back on its own word cannot be ignored by those who hitherto have sought to justify their own acceptance of the promises of the Government of Jakarta and the "cooperative" attitude it has been demonstrating since the Santa Cruz massacre.